The Children's Paper

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THE
CHILDREN'S PAPER
DECEMBER 1924 THOMAS NELSON AND SONS, LTD.

Out of the Snowdrift

"IT would be madness," said Jean; and my grandmother, who always gives in to her old and faithful servant, quite agreed. "Master Jack will just have to thole it. It isn't fit for a dog to turn out to-night."

I grumbled a good deal, but in my heart I knew that they were right. The snow had been steadily falling since two o'clock, and darkness had come on at four. Now the wind was howling across the moor and piling up the snow in drifts five or six feet deep. Probably before morning our lonely cottage on the moors above Claypole, where I lived with grandma, would be snowed up.

I had been looking forward to Christmas Eve for several weeks past. You see, there is no school within a good many miles of us, so the vicar gives me lessons, along with several other boys in the parish. His son, Bob Ralston, is my particular chum, and he it was who invited me to spend Christmas Eve and Christmas Day at the vicarage. There was to be a party; lots of boys and girls were invited; charades were to be acted, and there was a conjurer coming all the way from Manchester. And just as I was getting ready to set off for the vicarage, with my mind full of the jolly time I was going to have there, the beastly weather had broken down, and I was a prisoner. I was so angry that I went upstairs to my bedroom and punched the pillows furiously.

After a bit I felt better, and I came down to the sitting-room again. The wind was higher than ever. The gusts, like unseen giants, rattled our doors and windows angrily, and then went whooping away round the corner. The snow was still falling, and we were evidently in for what sailors call "a dirty night."

Grandma and Jean did everything in their power to make me forget my disappointment. For instance, they gave me a scrumptious tea. Jean had made some of those queen cakes that I am especially fond of, and grandma opened a large pot of apricot jam. After tea she foraged in an old trunk upstairs, and found several books that had belonged to my father, who had lost his life in the war. I ought to tell you that my mother was grannie's daughter, and that my father and mother lived in this very house for the first year after their marriage.

I was much interested in dad's books. From the dates in them I could see that he had them when he was about my own age. One of them had scores of conundrums in it. I am quite a dab at conundrums myself, so I was very keen on this particular book. I say, do you know when a door is not a door? Of course you're going to say when it's *a jar*. That's as old as the hills. My answer is, "When it's *a negress*."

Well, I read the conundrum book, and found quite a lot of riddles which I had never heard before. Grannie's good at riddles too, and we got so interested in them that I quite forgot about the party.

About eight o'clock we were startled by a furious banging on the front door.

"Mercy on us!" cried Jean, rushing into the sitting-room, "whatever's that?"

I picked up the poker. Suppose it should be a thief!

"Put the poker down, you silly boy, and go to the door," said grandma. "Somebody has lost his way and wants shelter. Let him in, whoever he is."

Jean and I went to the door and unlocked and unbarred it. The wind slammed the door back, dashed a drift of snow into the hall, and set the pictures on the wall dancing up and down.

"Will you please give us shelter?" asked a pleasant voice. "Our motor has broken down."

"Oh, come in," I cried; and in stepped a woman and two men. It was hard work to shut the door again, and I'm sure we couldn't have managed it at all had not the men helped.

Jean led the way into the kitchen, where the visitors shook off the snow and removed their big motor coats and their boots. Jean found some old slippers for them, and then took the lady to grannie's room to make some changes. I found that one of the two men was the husband of the lady, and the other was the chauffeur. The latter made himself comfortable in the kitchen, and the former I ushered into the sitting-room, where grandma was.

He was a middle-aged, stoutish man, with a white moustache, very red cheeks, bright, friendly eyes, and a bald head. I took to him at once. He sat down opposite to grannie, and immediately began to explain why he had been obliged, as he said, to throw himself in this abrupt way on her tender mercies. It seems that he was motoring with his wife to Dinsdale Park, where they were invited to spend the Christmas holidays. All went well until

they began to cross the moor, when the combined effect of the wind and the snow was too much for them. About half a mile away from our house their car had run into a six-foot drift of snow, and had refused to budge an inch.

Grannie made the gentleman and his wife very welcome, and Jean bustled about laying supper. Our visitors made a hearty meal, and after supper we sat round the fire for a chat.

While grannie and the lady found many topics of conversation in which they were both interested, the gentleman and I talked about conundrums.

"Conundrums, is it?" said the gentleman. "I used to know quite a lot of conundrums in my youthful days. Let me see if I can recollect some of them. They ought to be old enough to be new by now. Here's a Christmas conundrum for you: On which toe does a corn never grow?"

"Oh, that's easy," I said: "on the *mistletoe*."

"We used to think that rather good," said the gentleman; "but you young people nowadays are much smarter than we were. Try this: What's the difference between the king's eldest son and the water in a fountain?"

"I know that too," I replied. "One is heir to the throne, and the other is thrown to the air."

The gentleman looked surprised. "I say," he said, shaking his forefinger at me, "you've heard that before? You can't have guessed that right off the reel."

"Oh no," I said. "I haven't guessed any of them. They are all in this old book."

I handed it to him.

He looked at the cover of it and said, "Oh, I know that book. I had a copy of it when I was a boy."

He turned to the title-page. "Why," he cried, "this is amazing! This very copy used to belong to me. I gave it to my brother fifty years ago. See."

On the title-page were these words:

"*Jack Hamilton. A present from his brother Bob. Xmas* 1873."

The gentleman excitedly turned to grandma.

"May I ask, ma'am, how this book came into your possession?"

"It belonged to my son-in-law," she explained. "I have a box of his books upstairs."

"What was his name?" asked the stranger eagerly.

"Jack Hamilton. He was one of the Hamiltons of Dalziel," grandma replied. "This is his son."

For a moment I thought our visitor had gone mad. He shook grandma by the hand till I thought he would never stop, and he pressed me to him until he nearly squeezed all the breath out of my body.

His wife was just as excited. She kissed grandma, and then kissed me again and again.

"Just fancy, Bob!" she cried. "Here we come all the way from Australia to seek this boy. We come to grief on a lonely moor in a snowstorm, miles and miles from nowhere. We leave our motor, and knock at the door of the first house we see. Who should open it but the boy we have come from the Antipodes to find!"

"But I don't understand," cried grannie. "Will somebody please explain?"

"It's as clear as daylight, ma'am," said the excited gentleman. "I am Robert Hamilton, the brother of your son-in-law, the uncle of this boy, the donor of this book, and your very devoted humble servant. I came to this country to seek you out, and here in the most providential manner I have been led to you.

"The day before he was killed my poor brother wrote me from France telling me that the war had ruined him, and beseeching me, if he did not come out alive, to be as a father to his orphan lad and a friend to you, ma'am. That letter never reached my hand until four months ago. The mail-bag which contained it was stolen by a post-office official, in whose house it was recently found.

"Immediately I received the letter I made up my mind to retire from business—in which I have done very well—and to return to England with the object of adopting Jack's boy as my own son, and offering my services to you, ma'am. A merry, merry Christmas to us all!—the first of many merry Christmases which, with God's blessing, we'll spend together."

EDWARD SHIRLEY.

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THERE was a load of bricks on the football ground in anticipation of some reconstruction repairs. An aged supporter of the club came up, eyed the bricks fondly for a few minutes, knit his brows as if in deep thought, and remarked to the secretary who happened to be standing near, "Why didn't you get 'alf-bricks? They would be much handier."

"Handier!" echoed the secretary; "why, man, we couldn't build a pavilion with half-bricks!"

"Oh, a pavilion," sighed the old man; "I thought they were for the referee."

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THE Scotsman and the Irishman walked past a jeweller's shop, the window of which was filled with precious stones.

"Wouldn't you like to have your pick?" Sandy asked.

"Not my pick," said Mike. "I'd rather have my shovel!"

Plays from History

THE NORMAN INVASION

Summary

[A period of one hundred and forty years followed, in which struggles with the Danes were incessant, though it was not until 980 A.D. that a firm foothold was gained by the invaders.

In the years between 980 A.D. and 1017 A.D. vast sums of money were offered to the Danes to refrain from attacking the land—£16,000 being paid at one time, £24,000 at another, and again £48,000 on a third occasion; but always they returned to plunder and burn. At last the "Witan," or meeting of "wise men" of England, chose a Dane as king, and under Canute the land once again had peace.

During the eighteen years of his reign (1017–1035 A.D.) he did all he could to conciliate his English subjects; and on his death he was deeply mourned, for peace and prosperity had come with his reign.

Within a few years the kingship was restored to one of the line of the great Alfred. Edward, a Saxon, who had been educated in Normandy, where manners and customs were more refined than in his own land, was selected by the Witan. Coming to the throne with Norman prejudices and Norman tastes, he soon gave offence to the Saxons, for they saw all the important offices filled by Norman favourites.

The great Saxon leader of this time was Earl Godwin, and Edward, marrying the daughter of this great noble, practically gave the reins of government into the hands of Godwin. But a rupture soon came, for the Norman and Saxon parties could not long agree. The Saxons realized that William, Duke of Normandy, was making a bold bid for the throne in the near future; and they opposed this with all their might, naming Harold, the son of Earl Godwin, as their leader in the struggle, if struggle there was to be.

William had secured a promise from Edward that he should come to the throne; but this promise the king had no right to give, as all the kings were chosen by the Witan.

By accident Harold fell into the hands of the duke, who, by craft, secured Harold's promise also to help him to the throne.

On the death of Edward, William claimed the fulfilment of these promises; but Harold naturally opposed him. In the war which followed, Harold was slain at Hastings; and William, after defeating Edgar, who also claimed the throne, was named by the Witan as King of England. Thus his name has been handed down through the years as "William the Conqueror." So there commenced a fresh period of foreign rule for England, this time in the hands of the Normans.]

PLAY V.—THE OATH OF HAROLD

Characters:

Harold, Earl of Wessex; William, Duke of Normandy; Osric and Gilbert, two thanes of Harold's following; Saxon and Norman knights, priests, soldiers, etc.

Scene I.—Outside William's Palace in Normandy

The following should form a continuous action throughout the scene.

[*Knights, with their pages, pass to and fro; Norman men and women enter, greet one another, converse, and then pass out; occasionally a monk mingles with the crowd. Enter two Saxon thanes talking together.*]

Gilbert. The wreck of our vessel has been most unfortunate, for not only will Earl Godwin be anxious as to the fate of our lord, the Earl of Harold, but our own friends at home will fear for our safety. Meanwhile I am afraid that we are, more or less, prisoners of Duke William.

Osric. [*Stopping and turning quickly upon his friend*] How can you imagine such a thing? Ever since we have been at his court he has treated us with all courtesy, and we are free to come and go without hindrance.

Gilbert. [*Slowly*] Yes, 'tis true; but we are of little importance compared with Earl Harold, and he is the man whom William is trying to trap.

Osric. [*Heatedly*] Why should this be so? Earl Harold is known throughout Europe, and were William to treat him shamefully, the whole of Christendom would know of it and proclaim him a false knight.

Gilbert. [*Calmly*] Peace! peace! The duke is treating our lord with all honour; but he is wholly in William's power, although the captivity has a pleasant look. But here comes the earl! Let us question him and hear what he thinks.

[Harold *enters, walking moodily, and the knights move towards him with deference. The people stop and look towards him. As the knights stop before him he looks up.*

Gilbert and Osric. [*Speaking together*] Good-morrow, my lord!

Harold [*Looking at Osric*] Whence this angry look, Osric?

Osric. My lord, we but talked of the Duke William's designs towards us all, and I did not quite agree with Gilbert.

Harold. [*Placing a hand upon each of the knights' shoulders*] Saxons in a Norman land must not disagree

upon any subject. Would we were back in England, my lords, where speech need not be guarded or actions restrained ; but in Normandy we must show a united front.

Gilbert. My lord, we are united in your service, but we grow homesick, and this inaction is irksome. Is there any likelihood of a speedy return home ?

Harold. I trust it will not be long delayed, for I have spoken of it more than once to the duke. Yet if I persist in the question, he will believe that I weary of his kindness—for kind he has been to us all. But I would I was once more upon the sea, for I feel that I am not as free to choose my going as I would wish.

Gilbert. Is there no possibility of escape, my lord ?

Harold. Escape ? What mean you ? William will allow us to go when he is ready, but I think that first he will require some service of me. His friendship is one that seeks payment for kindness, and I would I knew what payment he needed. Under the excuse of doing me honour, soldiers stand day and night at my door. My every action is observed, my every speech weighed ; so important am I in the eyes of the duke.

Osric. My lord, step carefully, for England needs you.

Harold. [*Looking round and speaking quietly*] I much fear that William has need of England, and means to use me to obtain his desire. But we must not stand here, for already we attract attention, and I would not that William thought us discourteous or dissatisfied. Attend me, Osric ; and do you, Gilbert, follow slowly and guard me.

Gilbert. [*Bowing*] You do me honour, my lord !

[HAROLD *passes on with* OSRIC, *whilst* GILBERT *stands watching them, and talking to himself, with his hand upon his sword.*

Gilbert. I am certain this Norman duke means harm to him ; but if harm does come, Saxon steel shall shed Norman blood, and that I swear by all the saints !

[*Looks fiercely round him, and then follows in the wake of* HAROLD *and* OSRIC.

SCENE II.—THE COURTYARD OF WILLIAM'S PALACE

[*A temporary altar, covered with a cloth, stands in the middle of the courtyard, with a priest before it.* WILLIAM *is on one side, with his knights at the back of him ; whilst* HAROLD *stands facing him on the other side, with his thanes grouped about him.*]

William [*Speaking so that all can hear*] The saints have worked in my favour by bringing here as my guest you whom I delight to honour, the great Earl of Wessex. Cannot they further aid me, and delay your setting forth for some days ?

Harold. [*Warmly*] Nay, my lord duke, but I am anxious to return to my own land ; for happy though you have made me here, yet a longing for home must come, and I fain would be gone before your kindness binds me for ever with links of love to Normandy.

William. [*Advancing towards* HAROLD] Be it so ! Yet before you go you will not refuse to pledge me. I much desire your friendship, and would be certain that at any time I could command it. You have plighted your troth with my daughter, and, with the lands which she will bring to you, you will be a Norman lord, and as such owe me fealty. Swear, here and now, that you will be my faithful knight and aid my cause. Let such an oath be your parting gift, I beseech you.

[*As he says this he places his hands upon* HAROLD'S *shoulders.*

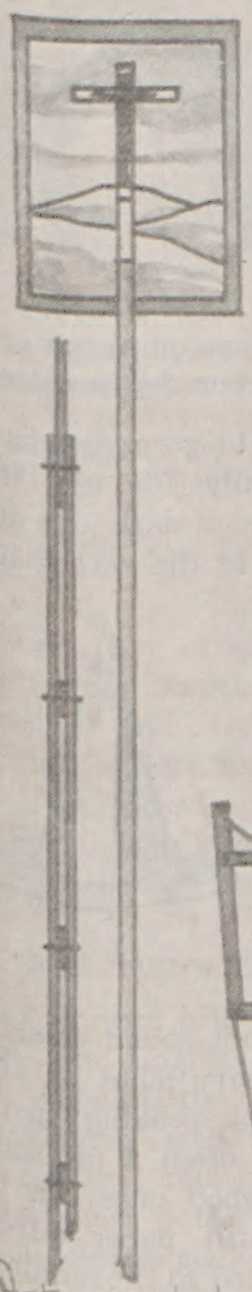
Harold. My lord, if you so desire it, churlish would it be of me to refuse. Your kindness will be but poorly paid by such a pledge, for as one of your barons such is only your due. [HAROLD *goes forward to the altar, and, placing one hand upon it and looking towards the knights and thanes, speaks distinctly*] I swear upon this altar that I will be your faithful knight, and will aid your cause whensoever you call upon my service.

[*Lifts his hands, and commences to walk towards the Saxon thanes.* WILLIAM *steps in front of him, and, taking him by the arm, leads him back to the altar, removes the cloth, showing a box beneath. He raises the lid and turns to* HAROLD.

William. See, my lord ! upon these holy relics you have sworn to help me to obtain my rights ; such is the crown of England. [HAROLD *starts, and steps back a pace with his hand to his sword*] You cannot draw back, for these knights of mine are witnesses that the Earl of Wessex has sworn to be my man. And now, my lord, farewell.

Harold. [*Aside*] Trapped at last. [*The Saxon thanes commence to draw their swords amidst shouts of* Dastard ! An unworthy trick ! False knight ! *But the Norman knights step forward as* HAROLD *turns to the Saxons and holds up his hands.*] Put away those weapons, and, friends, let us be gone [*turning to* WILLIAM, *who had rejoined the knights*]. Farewell, William of Normandy, false friend and perjured knight ! You have caught me as you intended, but some day we shall meet again, and there may be repayment for your treachery.

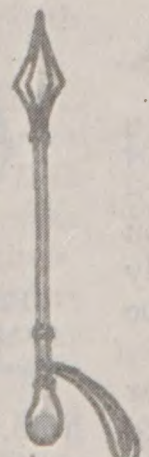
[*The Saxon thanes gather round their lord and pass out, muttering and looking fiercely towards the Norman knights, many of whom stand silent as if disapproving of William's action.*



Picture on pole showing fastening of millboard and laths

Norman Mace
cut from thick wood.
thong of leather

Saxon Helmet
(time of Harold)

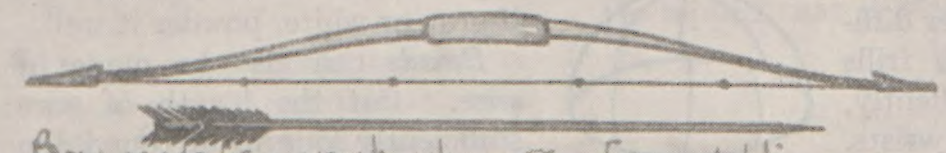


covered with tinfoil

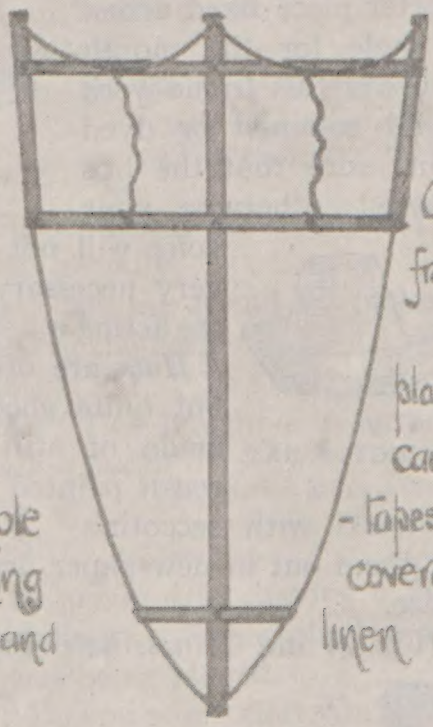
Norman Helmet
made from the crown of straw or silk hat.

Nose and neck pieces of cardboard.

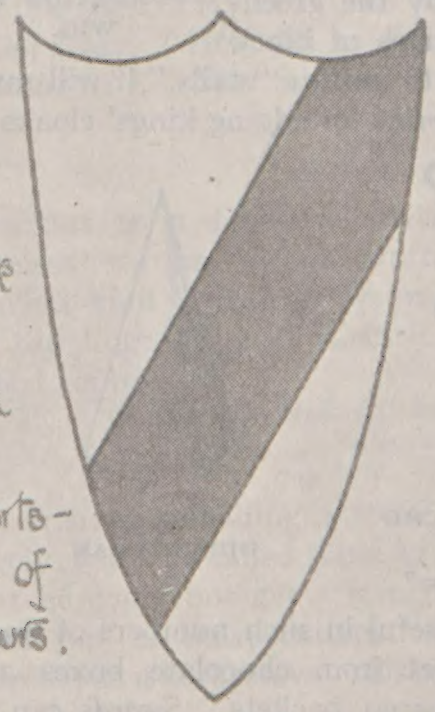
Norman lance
made from broomhandle
banneret from coloured linen.

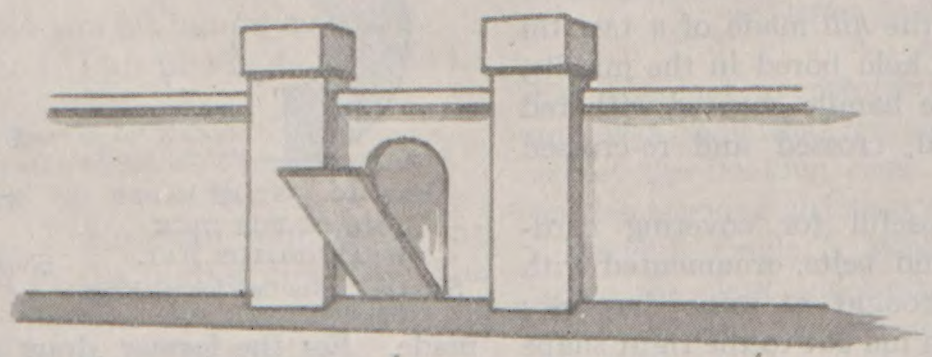


Bow made from yew bough - arrow from dahlia cane.



Norman Shield
frame 2ft x 3ft 6ins
9ins. at base
plasterers lath with
cane sidepieces
- tapes for arm supports -
covered with pieces of
linen of various colours.





Simple woodwork model of drawbridge

Toys made from Scraps

PART III.—AMATEUR THEATRICALS

By Winifred Hammond

THIS is the month when many of you will be acting in school plays, or preparing little theatrical parties for the holidays, so I intend to tell you of articles found in most houses—not necessarily "scraps" this month—which can be used for "dressing up."

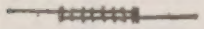


FIG. 1.—HOW TO JOIN HEAD WIRE FOR WIG.

Lots of children nowadays wear *Wellington boots*, which in addition to their use in plays of Wellington's time, will make excellent *top-boots* if a piece of light brown paper be pinned round the tops.

Elizabethan ruffs are rather difficult to make, but pie-dish frills will answer the purpose excellently, both for the neck and for the wrists.

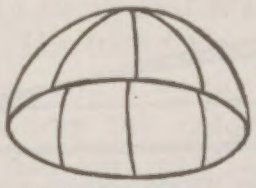


FIG. 2.—WIRE FOUNDATION FOR WIG.

Cotton-wool from fruit-boxes is often thrown away by the greengrocer, yet if tiny strips of black material are sewn on to imitate "tails," it will make excellent imitation *ermine* for edging kings' cloaks.

FIG. 3.—TOW MOUSTACHE AND BEARD.
Showing wire "ear-hooks."

FIG. 4.
DUNCE'S CAP.

As silver-paper is useful in such numbers of ways, collect all you can get from chocolate boxes and tobacco packets. *Swords* can be made of wood covered with silver paper, the *hilt* made of a tart tin with a hole bored in the middle, and the handle covered with red material, crossed and re-crossed with gold picture wire.

FIG. 5.
CHINESE HAT.

Silver paper, too, is useful for covering cardboard crowns, bracelets, and belts, ornamented with "jewels" which *can* be bought at some drapers'; but if this is impossible, tin foil cut to the right shape is the best substitute.

What a difference a *wig* makes when "dressing up"! So make one, get some cap-wire, and after measuring the size of the head it is to cover, cut off the necessary length, allowing at least two inches extra for sewing together (Fig. 1); fit this on the

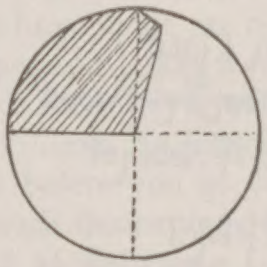


FIG. 6.—STIFF PAPER SHAPE FOR DUNCE'S HAT.
Showing extra flap for sticking.

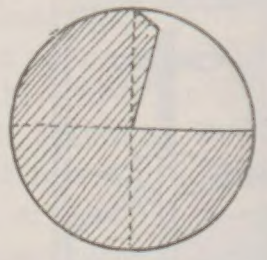


FIG. 7.—STIFF PAPER SHAPE FOR CHINESE HAT.
Showing extra flap for sticking.

head, and then cut short lengths to go across from side to side, fastening them carefully (Fig. 2). If a fair wig be wanted, cover with tow; if dark, dye and dry the tow before putting it on to the wire; and if grey or white, powder it well.

Beards can also be made of wire. Cut the length of wire sufficiently long to fit round the chin and to hook over the ears, with a shorter piece fixed across leaving a hole for the mouth (Fig. 3). Cover this frame-work with natural coloured or dyed tow, making sure that the lips are uncovered, otherwise your voice will not sound clear, a very necessary point if you are acting a "speaking" part.

FIG. 8.
WITCH'S HAT.

FIG. 9.
DICK WHITTINGTON HAT.

Hats are often a problem, but quite good ones can be made of stiff paper (afterwards painted to the required colour) fastened with seccotine. I should advise you to cut them out in newspaper first so as to get the right size.

Dunces (Fig. 4) and *Chinese hats* (Fig. 5) are easily

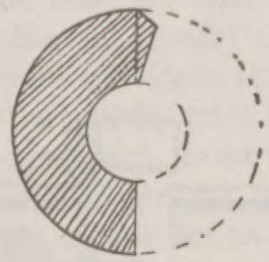


FIG. 10.—STIFF PAPER SHAPE FOR DICK WHITTINGTON HAT.
Showing extra flap for sticking.

FIG. 11.—STIFF PAPER SHAPE FOR DICK WHITTINGTON HAT, TOP OF CROWN.
Showing little flaps for sticking to crown.

made. For the former, draw a large circle two and a half feet across, divide it into *exact* quarters, one only of which will be needed (Fig. 6).

For the *Chinese hat*, draw a similar circle and take three quarters of it (Fig. 7). As this hat is likely to

"wobble," stick a thin piece of woollen material inside to keep it in place.

FIG. 12.—STIFF PAPER SHAPE FOR DICK WHITTINGTON HAT, BRIM. Showing little flaps for sticking to base of crown.

A *witch's hat* (Fig. 8) is made like the dunce's, with the addition of a brim.

One that is more difficult, but not too difficult for most of you, I expect, is a *Dick Whittington* (Fig. 9). To make the crown take a half circle, from which the inner part has been cut (Fig. 10), then cut a circle to fit the top of it (Fig. 11). The brim will need half a circle with "ears" joining the top half of the circle (Fig. 12).

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ONCE a boy of about seven was trying to reach a high door knocker when an old gentleman was passing, and, seeing the boy, stopped and said, "Shall I knock for you, sonny?"

"Yes, please, sir," said the boy.

So the man knocked.

"Now," said the boy, "you'd better run!"

Sent in by MARGARET M'LEAN,
32 Werter Road, Putney, S.W. 15

✢ ✢ ✢

PAT jumped into a railway carriage, sank on to the seat, and laughed heartily.

"What is the joke, my friend?" inquired an old gentleman seated in the corner.

"Why," replied Pat, "I've had my revenge on that there porter; I've bought a return ticket and I'm going *to walk it back.*"

Sent in by MOLLY WHITEHOUSE,
3 Taylor Street, Widnes.

✢ ✢ ✢

SAMBO landed in prison after having a fight for the possession of a hole in a fence round a cricket field while a match was being played.

Magistrate. "Do you admit that you hit this man?"

Sambo. "Yes, sah."

Magistrate. "And did you hit him in defence?"

Sambo. "No, sah, no! I hit him in de jaw and he fell over de fence."

Sent in by KENNETH KEMP,
The Southfield School, Southfields, S.W.18.

✢ ✢ ✢

AN American and an Englishman were discussing as to which had lived in the hottest climate. The American said, "In America the sun scorches the flies' wings off as they crawl up the windows."

"Oh," said the Englishman, "we have to feed our chickens on ice-cream in the summer to save them laying hard-boiled eggs."

SMILES

"The happy smiles of the young are the sunshine of the old"

"WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR," read the small boy from his history book, "landed in England in A.D. 1066."

"What does A.D. stand for?" inquired the teacher.

"Why, 'after dark,' of course," was the reply.

Sent in by SYDNEY HOLMES,
The Southfield School, Wandsworth, London, S.W.18,
to whom a book prize has been awarded.

✢ ✢ ✢

DURING a natural history examination a small boy was asked which of all the creatures eats less food than any other.

He replied that it was the moth, because it eats holes.

Sent in by L. B. HYATT,
52 London Road, Redhill, Surrey.

✢ ✢ ✢

Old Lady. "And why are you crying, dear?"

Little Girl. "My bruvver's broke my doll."

Old Lady. "How did he do that?"

Little Girl. "Wiv 'is 'ead, when I 'it 'im wiv it."

Sent in by JOHN COULTON,
Newarth Lane, Hesketh Bank.

✢ ✢ ✢

VISITORS to a Highland village where there is a wireless station met a worthy, and asked him, "What kind of fruit grows on that tree?" pointing to the huge pole. "Electric currents," came the smart reply.

Sent in by NESSIE CAMERON, c/o Morrison,
84 Govanhill Street, Glasgow, S.S

✢ ✢ ✢

AN Irishman, drilling a form, was getting on quite nicely, when he called them to get into a straight line. But he could not get a straight line. So at last he cried out in exasperation, "Bah! your line is as crooked as a corkscrew. All of ye fall out and have a look at it."

Sent in by M. RAILLARD,
27 Clayton Road, Jesmond, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

✢ ✢ ✢

PAT was not accustomed to travelling by railway and was somewhat perplexed as to how he would accost the booking clerk. While he was pondering on this a young girl stepped up to the clerk and said, "Maryhill, single." When she had gone, Pat went up to the clerk and said, "Pat Maguire, married." "But where are you going to, Pat?" said the astonished clerk. "Shure, an' ye didna ask Mary Hill where she was going to."

Sent in by NELLIE TODD,
46 Glynn Road, Larne.

STORIES for YOUNGER READERS

"Froggie's Ride"

By A. M. Sloan

One fine summer's day, when a little boy was lying on the grass in a garden, near a pool, he was surprised to see a little frog hop out of the pool and quietly look around.

The little boy's new motor car, which had been given to him for his birthday, was standing a little away from him—he had been trying to make it run on the grass, but it would not go—so he just kept very still, and froggy said: "Oh! what a lovely car. I wonder what it would be like to pop into one of those little seats and have a ride." Then he hopped a little bit nearer, and a little bit nearer until he could just touch it, and then, getting very bold, he just hopped into the little seat, and put his wet foot on to the steering wheel and off went the car, in great style.

"Well, I never!" thought the little boy. "Frogs can do better than boys."

Away went froggy, right round the pool to see his little sweetheart, and to proudly ask her to come for a drive in a real motor car.

She, of course, was so surprised to see her froggy like a king riding about a garden on a hot summer's day. So she just hopped across to the wood and got her mushroom sunshade and her daisy chain so that she looked nice and smart.

Froggy came along, stopped his car, and in popped little sweetheart froggy. She was beaming with pride, with her sunshade up, sitting on a real seat beside her motor-man froggy. All the grasshoppers had to hop out of the way quickly in case they got run over, and all the beetles and ants and woolly worms looking out wondered wherever the frogs had got such a fine car.

But the little boy just laughed 'cos he had just dreamt it.

Mottoes for December

I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live up to the light I have. I must stand with any one who stands right, stand with him while he is right, and part with him when he goes wrong. John Drinkwater.

Sent in by Barbara Smith,
2 Houghton Road, Dunstable,
to whom a book prize has been awarded.

Great works are performed, not by strength but by perseverance. Johnson.

Sent in by Phyllis Davies,
Stoneybridge School, Belbroughton, near Stourbridge,
to whom a book prize has been awarded.

REPRODUCTIONS IN BLACK AND WHITE OF THE COLOURED DRAWINGS SENT IN BY THE WINNERS OF THE FIRST PRIZE IN THE DRAWING AND COLOURING COMPETITIONS (A), (B), AND (C).

P.J.

THE SECRET SERVICE BOY

By Lord Frederic Hamilton

EPISODE VI (*Concluded*)

MR. DAVENANT in plain clothes was strolling rather aimlessly about the Cathedral Close, when he suddenly saw a familiar face, and darted across the road to greet an elderly grey-bearded man, in whom he recognized a former organist and choir-master of Stonebridge School.

"Mr. Meadows! Mr. Meadows!" he cried. "Don't you remember me at Stonebridge, sir—Davenant?"

"Ah, yes! Davenant, of course I do. How you've shot up! You were the best solo-boy I ever had. I suppose that your voice has broken now."

"As cracked as Bedlam, sir, and my new voice has not quite made up its mind what it wants to be, but I can still sing alto."

"Ah! you can sing alto; then a special Providence has sent you to me. I remember that you were always a good reader. I am deputizing for the Cathedral organist whilst he's on his holidays, and we are doing Spohr's 'How lovely are Thy dwellings fair' this afternoon. One of my altos is down with influenza, and for that chromatic stuff of Spohr's I must have two altos. Will you sing for me this afternoon, Davenant?"

"Certainly, sir. I know the anthem, but I should like to run through it first. What is the Service, sir?"

"Garrett in D. We often had it at Stonebridge; you must know it."

"I could do it standing on my head, sir."

"Come over to my lodgings and we will run through it. I hope that you will not mind one thing, Davenant. The boy-choristers of Silchester still keep to the Elizabethan ruff, and wear frills round their necks."

"They must look awfully like mutton cutlets, sir, but I don't mind a bit looking like a mutton cutlet too."

"We will try over the music, and then please turn up in the choir vestry at 2.45. You are Cantoris side."

Accordingly, at 3 p.m. Mr. Davenant marched into Silchester Cathedral with the rest of the choir, in cassock and surplice, with a frill round his neck. When the Psalms were over, he allowed his attention to wander, and took a look about him. He saw, immediately opposite him, a face he was not likely to forget. It was that of a lady with rippling chestnut hair, and large grey eyes. She was accompanied by a very youthful officer in uniform who never took his eyes off her.

"Bertha Vollenhaupt!" * exclaimed the amazed P.J. almost audibly, adding to himself, "Now, what the dickens ought I to do?" He thought the situation over. Were he to feign illness and leave the Cathedral on the chance of finding a constable outside, what policeman would listen to a choir-boy's yarn about a well-known German agent being amongst the congregation? That would be no good. If, on the other hand, he were to wait till the service was over, Bertha Vollenhaupt would certainly elude him. The perplexed Davenant got so absorbed in this problem that the alto part in the anthem was hardly rendered as the composer had intended it; and, as he had anticipated, every sign of the daring but attractive Bertha had vanished when he issued from the choir vestry at the conclusion of the service.

P.J. made his way to the "Gold Fish" tea-house, bursting with his news.

"I sang alto in the Cathedral this afternoon, Mr. Ferguson," he began.

"What a boy you are for doing unexpected things. Did you sing well?"

"No, rottenly, but who do you think was sitting bang opposite me?—Bertha Vollenhaupt. I didn't know what to do. If I'd gone out to find a 'Bobby,' he would never have listened to me in a surplice, looking like the other choir-boys; and if I'd gone after her without changing after the service—well, you know, one really couldn't leg it through the streets of Silchester in a red cassock and a surplice with a frill round one's neck, looking so like a ham that if you'd met me you'd have wanted to make me into sandwiches."

"I don't see what you could have done, under the circumstances. You're quite certain that it was Bertha Vollenhaupt?"

"Perfectly certain. One couldn't mistake that reddish hair and those big grey eyes. She was with a young officer in khaki, and she never noticed me. Of course she wouldn't expect to see me in the choir-seats with that silly frill on."

"Where Bertha is there is always trouble brewing. She must know that I am here, and probably guesses what I have come about. I wish that we could have found out where she is staying here. Naturally, it will be under some *alias*."

"I'm awfully sorry to have let you down, Mr. Ferguson. I thought and thought so much about it, that I fairly mucked up the anthem. The alto goes: '. . . are thy dwellings fair! O Lord, how dear!'—G, F natural, E, G, G sharp, G sharp, A, E flat, and I got it all wrong. Now, Bertha will go about saying Silchester Cathedral has got a rotten bad choir. That woman would say anything. She once said that my socks were loud. They weren't; they were jolly neat."

"Never mind, Towzer. The whole thing is annoying, but it cannot be helped. Go and jump into your livery now, and bring the car round. We're off to Valleyfield."

At the General's, which was some three miles out of Silchester, P.J., left to his own resources, found the time hanging rather heavily on his hands. Being still extremely pleased with his own appearance in

* You will find out all about our hero's previous meeting with her in the complete book, "P.J., the Secret Service Boy." Get it from the Library.

the chauffeur's livery, he took a stroll down the drive, but there was no one there to admire his gaiters and his bright yellow collar. It occurred to him that the broad belt of laurels, yew, box, and other evergreens, would, in this genial April weather, prove an ideal place for bird-nesting, and there was still a sufficiency of light. Into the evergreens he plunged, and was fortunate enough to find in the first half-hour a hedge-sparrow's nest, a blackcap's, and a missel-thrush's, besides many commoner ones. A rustling amongst the shrubs announced the approach of some one, and P.J. realized for the first time that he was not an invited guest, but that he was supposed to be a visitor's servant, and that visiting chauffeurs do not usually go bird-nesting without permission.

"This yellow collar looks awfully smart!" he thought, "but I show up like a blessed canary in it;" so he insinuated his slender young proportions into the thick foliage of a laurustinus, from which, whilst completely hidden himself, he could get a fairly clear view. The footsteps came nearer and nearer with a strange hesitancy, until the coarse and bloated features of Brown appeared in front of P.J.'s hiding-place. The man was evidently also looking for a place of shelter. At length, to P.J.'s relief, Brown, who was in plain clothes, moved on, but not for very far, for the rustling soon ceased.

"I'll lay anything that Bertha sent him here," thought P.J. "If any papers are stolen to-night, of course Brown wasn't in the house. That's very cute. I must get out of this." So, with infinite patience and caution, he noiselessly zigzagged his way through the shrubs. It was a long process, but he eventually gained the drive, and walking on tiptoe on the grass edging, he made towards the entrance lodge. Suddenly he turned and walked back to the garage, crunching the gravel loudly and whistling cheerily. At the garage he had to come to an important decision. Should he tell Ferguson at once, and through him inform the General that the threatened attack was for to-night, or should he try to tackle the job "on his own"? He ought unquestionably to have adopted the former course, and he knew it; but unfortunately the memory of an old score rather rankled in Mr. Davenant's mind, and he rashly determined to try and get "a little bit of his own back," and to undertake the task single-handed.

"I'll get even with Bertha over 'Bergen-op-Zoom,'" he thought, "and I'll teach her to call my socks loud another time."

Obviously, the first thing to do was to study the lie of the ground. Between the garage and the house there was a copse, traversed by a noisily chattering brook. P.J. satisfied himself that the bridge carrying the drive over the brook was the only one in sight. Brown must therefore cross this bridge. Beyond the bridge it was just possible to see in the faint twilight that a lawn extended right up to the windows without any intervening gravel. In the centre was a bow window opening to the ground.

"I'll bet anything that he'll go for that middle window," said P.J. to himself.

He then returned to the garage and selected from the tool-box of the car the very largest spanner it contained. With the spanner in his hand, he concealed himself in a laurel bush on the far side of the bridge, but in full view of it, and an endless, weary period of waiting ensued. Night fell; at times the uncanny whirr of a night-jar broke the silence. In the grey stillness an owl hooted faintly far away. An answering hoot came at intervals from a wood near by. The cheerful gurgling of the brook sounded very loud in this dim, unfamiliar, colourless world which had replaced the sunlit view of two hours earlier—the glad sight of a countryside breaking into renewed youth and greenery at the magic touch of spring. A distant clock struck eight. After another seemingly interminable period of waiting a faint footfall was heard.

"There's Brown; he's sticking to the grass," reflected P.J.

Then came a very faint crunch of gravel.

"That's the bridge."

Then silence. P.J. very cautiously emerged from his concealment. After taking half a dozen steps he stopped.

"This will never do. These infernal gaiters squeak like a pig with its throat cut; they'll give the whole show away, as they nearly did this afternoon. And these boots creak enough to waken the dead. I know—the brook; when they're wet through, they won't make any row," and Mr. Davenant walked deliberately into the brook, and stood knee-deep in the water.

"Oh, crumbs! this water's like ice! This blessed brook must rise at the North Pole."

Then slowly, and very cautiously, he made his way noiselessly in his soaked boots across the lawn to the bow-window. A catch had been opened, probably with a knife-blade, and one half of the French window was open. Through the window P.J. could see a dim figure crouching before a desk. A tiny circle of light from an electric torch played on a keyhole into which the dark figure was inserting what looked like a long twisted wire. There was a curious sense of unreality about the whole scene. The dark room, the one small spot of vivid light, the intense stillness, the knowledge that within a few feet of where this silent figure was at work, men were living their ordinary everyday life, and carrying on their everyday conversations, made P.J. feel as though he were in a dream.

The silence was broken by a sharp click, and a drawer opened. P.J. realized that, having decided to undertake the job single-handed, everything now depended on his own action. He pulled himself together, and, holding his breath and on tiptoe, he crept through the open window, and with all the strength of his vigorous young arm, he brought his spanner down on the head of the crouching figure. The man went down like a log, but in his fall he managed to overturn with his legs a small table and a chair, which fell with a deafening clatter. In one instant, as it seemed to P.J., the room was a blaze of electric light and full of people, and Mr. Davenant had the unpleasant experience of finding a revolver

levelled at his head, whilst a very stern voice called out, "I warn you that I shall shoot you if you stir. Put up your hands at once," and a small chauffeur obediently extended his arms to their utmost length.

"What are you doing alone in my office at half-past eight at night?" asked the stern voice.

"It's all right," cried Ferguson's voice. "That is only my motor-boy John."

"I don't care who he is," replied the General, who

had never lowered his pistol. "What is he doing alone in my office at half-past eight at night?"

P.J. at length found his voice. "If you would come round the desk, sir, you will see that I am not alone," he said.

The General and Ferguson stepped forward, and for the first time saw the unconscious figure of Brown lying on the floor.

"By Jove!" cried Ferguson, "that fellow nearly did us in the eye after all."

"I am still waiting for an explanation," said the General. "The window burst open, a drawer forced; what have you to say for yourself? You may put your arms down," he added, as he closed the window.

"Perhaps I had better explain," began Ferguson. "It came to my knowledge, it is unnecessary to say how, that the man Brown, who, you will remember, is a German by birth, intended to break into your office here to-morrow, Friday, night. My motor-boy, John, knew of this too. I was meaning to warn you about this to-morrow morning, so that we could have everything ready for giving Brown a warm reception by night-time, but something seems to have happened. My chauffeur can perhaps explain it. Tell the General what took place, John."

P.J. rightly interpreted this as a hint not to disclose his real identity. His spanner still in one hand, his cap in the other, he began his tale.

"As Mr. Ferguson has just said, sir, I knew that Brown was going to try and break into your office to-morrow night; so when I saw him hiding amongst the bushes in the drive this afternoon, I guessed that something was up. I thought, sir, that a spanner might come in handy if there was a scrap, so I took one, and hid behind the laurels for an hour. When I saw Brown creeping across the lawn I followed him very quietly; and when I found him opening your desk with picklocks, I just tapped him on the head with my spanner, and put him to sleep. That's all, sir."

The facts spoke for themselves: the unconscious Brown, with a large cut on his head; the false keys, picklocks, and electric torch beside him; the small "jemmy" protruding from his pocket; the opened drawer with some of its papers withdrawn; the bloodstains on P.J.'s spanner, all formed indisputable evidence of the truth of his story. The General was satisfied.

An army doctor examined the prostrate Brown and declared that he was only stunned. "Though I think that he will have a pretty sore head when he comes to," he added. "You must have given him a very heavy blow, young man; you have nearly cracked his skull."

"I did my best, sir," remarked P.J. modestly. "I let him have it all I knew."

"You seem to have behaved very well, my boy," said the General in a gentler tone. "I am sorry I spoke so roughly to you just now. Why, God bless me, you are wet through!" as he noticed the pool of water in which P.J. was standing.

"That's nothing, sir," grinned Mr. Davenant. "I took a little walk in the brook to soak my gaiters; they were making such an awful row. That man would have spotted that I was following him if they'd gone on squeaking."

"This will be a military, not a civil case," said the General; "that man will go before a court-martial. Matthews and Grant, lift him up, please, and carry him to one of those empty bedrooms on the top floor. You had better go with him, Collins," he added to the army doctor, "and do what is necessary. Keep an orderly constantly in the room with him till to-morrow."

Ferguson had been examining the window fastenings, and now turned to his cousin, the General.

"Really, Tom, you should select a room upstairs for your office. There are no shutters here, and these fastenings are so flimsy that a child could undo them."

"You are, oddly enough, the second person to-day who has pointed that out to me. A very charming American widow, a Mrs. Otis van Schenk, drove over here this morning with Lady Selworth. Mrs. van Schenk has come from New York on behalf of the American Red Cross, and she is staying with Lady Selworth, who is President of the Wiltshire Red Cross. Mrs. van Schenk examined the window-catches, and begged me to have iron shutters added, as she declared that any one could break in here. A most agreeable woman—a cultivated American of the best type. No longer quite young, but still very good-looking, with most peculiar colouring. Masses of rippling chestnut hair, and large grey eyes. She used some peculiar perfume; my office smelt like a bed of violets for an hour after she had left. A very attractive woman! Whatever is the matter with your motor-boy? He's waving his arms about like a semaphore."

"Please, sir, I should like to say a word to Mr. Ferguson," spluttered P.J.; and as Ferguson went up to him he whispered excitedly, "That's Bertha, Mr. Ferguson; it's Bertha Vollenhaupt! It can't be anybody else. Do see if she hasn't stolen something from here."

"My chauffeur, who naturally gets to know of some of our little secrets," began Ferguson, "assures me that your Mrs. Otis van Schenk is no other than the notorious German agent, Bertha Vollenhaupt, a lady who has hitherto always managed to elude us."

"Impossible, my dear Arthur, quite impossible!" declared the General. "You do not mean to suggest that Lady Selworth would have a German spy staying in her house. It's perfectly preposterous. Besides, Mrs. van Schenk is an American, and spoke with a strong American accent."

"So did Sadie Maddison," murmured P.J., forgetting that he was supposed to be a servant.

"My motor-boy reminds me of another occasion when Bertha Vollenhaupt pretended to be an American, and with some success too," remarked Ferguson. "Now, Tom, let us put the matter to a practical test. Just examine your desk, and see if any papers are missing."

"I never leave anything lying about," asserted the General, "but my aide-de-camp has not yet learnt to be sufficiently careful. Woodhouse, see if everything on your table is in order, with nothing missing."

The A.D.C., after a brief examination of his table, was visibly upset.

"I'm afraid, sir," he faltered, "that Memos C and D, and those lists you gave me to copy, are gone. I put them there this morning, and meant to type them to-night. I'm afraid, sir, that I forgot to lock them up. They're gone."

"I've a good mind to send you back to your regiment for this, Woodhouse," said the General sternly. "Unpardonable carelessness. Quick! go to the telephone and ring up Avonside, the house Lady Selworth has taken. Ask if Mrs. Otis van Schenk is still there."

Five minutes later the crestfallen A.D.C. announced that Mrs. Otis van Schenk had left for London by the 1.30 train.

"She didn't," declared Ferguson emphatically, "because my motor-boy, John, saw her in the Cathedral at the three o'clock service. It is very easy in a big station like Silchester to go in with your luggage at one end and to come out at the other end."

"We must lay hands on that woman," fumed the General.

"You won't; at least we have never succeeded in doing so. Do you want my motor-boy any longer, because it must be his supper-time? You can go, John. We return to London at ten to-morrow."

P.J. touched his forelock, grinning inwardly as he did so.

"Good evening, gentlemen," he said with a grave face.

"That's a very sharp lad of yours, Arthur," commented the General as P.J. disappeared through the window. "Oddly enough, he talks like an educated boy, and used some expressions which surprised me."

"Oh! I fancy that he is fairly well educated," agreed Ferguson.

On the lawn Mr. Davenant felt so elated at the various events of the evening that he determined that he must let off steam in some way.

"I'm awfully glad that the General reminded me that my legs were wet through. I knew that I had cold feet," he soliloquized, "but I thought they came from the beastly revolver he was pointing at my head. I had forgotten that I stood in that cold brook. Good business! I'm not such a funk as I thought I was. I suppose it wouldn't do for the chauffeur to offer to race that A.D.C. chap to the gate and back. Well, here goes! I must warm my legs up."

Accordingly, Mr. Davenant took a brisk run to restore his circulation; then, smartening himself up, he appeared very spruce and dapper in the servants' hall for supper, where he succeeded in making himself most agreeable. The story of the attempted theft of papers had, of course, by now spread through the house, but John was very guarded in replying to the countless questions with which he was bombarded.

Next morning John had placed the luggage in the car, and was lolling back in his seat with a carefully assumed air of professional indifference, when Ferguson appeared. The General had already gone into Silchester. A window was thrown up, and a pretty housemaid waved her adieux to the chauffeur. P.J., quite forgetting the part he was supposed to be playing, waved his gloved hand gaily in response, and shouted,—

"I do hope that you'll hear soon from George Fortune, Edith. He's sure to be all right, so you mustn't be down in the mouth about him;" and as another head appeared at the window, he added, "And remember, Dorothy, that Stanley Lawrence will be training at least three months, and the war will most likely be over by then, so keep your pecker up. Cheerio, both of you! Good luck!"

"Now, Towzer, does a real chauffeur behave like that before his master?" asked Ferguson, as he took the wheel and they moved off.

"I'm most awfully sorry; I clean forgot. You see, Edith is most frightfully cut up because she hasn't heard from her young man in France for three weeks, and Dorothy is walking out with Stanley Lawrence, the postman. She's awfully down on her luck because he has just joined up, so I wanted to buck them both up a little."

"You seem to have got to know about their private affairs very quickly."

"Only because they were so decent to me. What an awful lot of nice people there are in the world, Mr. Ferguson! You've been most frightfully decent to me, so has Dick Taylor, so have those maids."

"Somehow I think, little Towzer, that to the end of your life you will go on wondering why people are all so 'frightfully decent to you.' And you will never guess why."

"I say, Mr. Ferguson," asked P.J. rather timidly, when they had gone a mile or two farther, "we couldn't turn back, could we? I've left that missel-thrush's egg in my room at Valleyfield, and it's the only one I've got."

"I'm afraid we can't go back for it. By the way, Towzer, do Secret Service men go bird-nesting as a rule?"

"I jolly well know one who does, whenever he gets the chance," grinned Mr. Davenant. "Here are a lot of people. I must look more chauffeur-y," and he stuck his slim gaitered legs out, and assumed a face of wooden stolidity.

As they approached a cross-road they heard the raucous warning of a Klaxon horn, and a two-seater containing a solitary woman shot at right angles across their path. One glance at the occupant of the car was enough for P.J.

"That's Bertha! That's Bertha Vollenhaupt, Mr. Ferguson," he shouted. "Hadn't we better chevy her? She's in a Straker-Squire."

Ferguson instantly swung the Rolls-Royce round the corner. The car they were pursuing had a lead of nearly a quarter of a mile by now. The big engine of the Rolls-Royce responded at once to the full throttle, and she tore over the ground like an express locomotive. The driver of the leading car realized that, with the superior speed of the pursuer, her one chance of escape lay in turning as many corners as possible, so she twisted and doubled like a hare. She seemed to take every turning she came to, and at every turning her shorter car gained on the more unwieldy Rolls-Royce. At length unkind fate led her on to a long stretch of straight road without any cross-roads whatever.

"Tally-ho! Bergen-op-Zoom!" yelled out Mr. Davenant at the very top of his voice, quite forgetting that he was supposed to be a professional chauffeur.

Ferguson was a good quarter of a mile behind the Straker-Squire when he turned into this level stretch. The road made a sudden turn beyond the half-mile of straight, and uncertainty lay beyond the turn. He realized that it must be now or never, and opened his throttle. Wiltshire streaked by, a long blur of grey hedges, with a sharp "phut" whenever a tree or telegraph post whizzed past. P.J., by now absolutely mad with excitement, kept his eyes constantly on the speedometer.

"How perfectly topping!" he yelled. "Fifty-six! fifty-eight! fifty-nine! sixty! Oh! give her more, Mr. Ferguson. We're doing sixty-two now. Never mind our blooming necks; never mind smashing up the old car. Can't you go faster? We're winning hands down. Just a little more and we've got her."

Still the Straker-Squire reached the corner first, and no sooner had Ferguson turned it than he closed his throttle and jammed his brakes hard on, for a heavy wagon, proceeding in the same direction with a somnolent driver, was blocking half the narrow lane, and it is perhaps superfluous to add that the cart was on the wrong side of the road. The Straker-Squire shot past the cart also on the wrong side with a prolonged bellow of the Klaxon horn. This strident roar produced the precise effect its originator had calculated on, for it awoke the carter, who began pulling his patient horse over to the left side of the road, thus effectually blocking the narrow lane. Ferguson had meanwhile to decide quickly how he was to avoid a collision.

"I'm going to risk it, Towzer, and shall make a try at scraping through on the edge of the road," he shouted. "It's our only chance. Hold on tight; we may have a bit of a smash."

The car moved on, then for a second it seemed as though she would overturn. She gave a terrific lurch as the off-side wheels sank into the soft ground. Ferguson threw his entire weight on the steering-wheel, but the pull on the steering was too much for him. There was a loud report, and with a wrenching of metal the car came to a standstill, its off-side front wheel buried in the soft bank beside the road.

"Confound all beery and half-boozy Wiltshire carters!" cried Ferguson angrily. "Bertha has given us the slip again. I perhaps ought not to have tried it, but it was worth it. You weren't nervous, were you, Towzer? I forgot that you were sharing the risk."

"Nervous be blowed! I beg your pardon, Mr. Ferguson, I mean that I simply loved it. It was most frightfully exciting, and I should like to do it again. We did sixty-two; it was simply ripping. Now we've fairly got it in the neck. Our off-side front tyre has burst, and the off-side wing is absolutely buckled to blazes. How am I to turn out *my* car properly again, Mr. Ferguson? Just tell me that. We always call them *our* cars, you know. I can't

help being rather bucked at Bertha having got off. You may say what you like, but you can't deny that she is a real sport, and she *can* drive a car."

"Possibly; but that will not prevent me from doing my duty. Now we will get the car out, and see what the damage is."

Ferguson threw her in reverse, but the car only ground and shivered and remained motionless.

"The wheels can't bite in this mud and soft ground," he cried. "Get the mat out, Towzer, and put it under the back wheel."

After the mat was in position, Ferguson again opened the throttle. The car hesitated, responded, gave a violent jerk, and glided back on to the road. Ferguson made a rapid examination of the damage.

"I can only find the burst tyre and the buckled mud-guard. Get out the jack, Towzer, and jack her up. I'll put on the spare wheel, and you try with some tool or other to straighten out the mud-guard."

"It might have been worse," commented P.J. cheerfully, "and after all we've had an awful lot of fun for our money."

"Towzer, I will candidly own that I haven't the faintest idea where we are," said Ferguson, as they once more took the road. "We will get our direction from the first signpost we come to. I must find a telegraph office, or, better still, a public telephone. Did you by any chance note the number of that car? I had to keep my eyes on the road."

"The number was A.M. 1139," answered P.J. promptly. "And don't you think that we had better follow the telegraph wires? They're bound to lead us to a village in time."

In a quarter of an hour they reached a village, where a red-and-white plate announced the presence of a public telephone. The board over the post office informed them that they were at East Semley, some fifteen miles due west of Silchester. Ferguson, warning P.J. that he would be some time, disappeared into the post office.

The youth of East Semley, male and female, trooped out from the school, and collected round this car, whose battered mud-guard testified to some exciting adventure. P.J. felt that the opportunity was too good a one to be lost. Throwing back the bonnet and opening the tool-chest, he pretended to make some important repairs to the engine, burying his head in the bonnet, and not forgetting to change his implement from the tool-chest each minute or so. The children followed his every movement with breathless interest. Mr. Davenant closed the bonnet and lit a "gasper," blowing smoke down his nostrils and strutting round the car as though entirely unconscious of this admiring juvenile gallery.

"What awful fun it is pretending to be some one else!" he thought. "These kids would never have looked at me if I'd been only myself. It's the gaiters that do it."

Ferguson appeared whilst Mr. Davenant's game of "make-believe" was in progress, and signed to him to enter the car. Throwing away his "gasper," and with a touch at his cap, he cranked up, and leant back in the car with a look of most wearied indifference, without vouchsafing one glance at the envious youth of East Semley.

"We go straight to Silchester Police Headquarters, Towzer," observed Ferguson. "Every single policeman in Wiltshire is on the look-out now for A.M. 1139. We must be able to trace the car."

Silchester Police Headquarters informed them that A.M. 1139 was at that very moment reposing in a small garage exactly opposite Silchester railway station.

"It is quite obvious that Bertha left it there, and then walked over to the railway station," commented Ferguson. "She might be anywhere by now."

"Mr. Ferguson," hazarded P.J. rather diffidently, "if you were to show them your card, they might give you an engine. Bertha may have gone to Exeter. Just think what a clinking run we could have to Exeter on one of Drummond's big 4.6.0's! It's eighty-eight miles from Silchester to Exeter; and if we got a clear road we could fairly buzz along, though there are an awful lot of junctions—Templecombe, and Yeovil, and Chard. What do you think?"

"No, Towzer, it won't do. You are not going to get another engine run out of me. Why should Bertha have gone to Exeter more than anywhere else? No, back to London again."

As they moved slowly through the Silchester streets, P.J. begged Ferguson to stop. "There's my pal Dick Taylor, Mr. Ferguson. I should so like to say good-bye to him."

Taylor's comely countenance did not wear its habitual cheerful aspect.

"You ask me what's up, John," he replied in answer to P.J.'s comments on the change. "I'll tell you what's up. I've 'ad my car pinched, that's all! My beautiful Straker-Squire pinched! I left 'er all right in the garage at eight, and by nine she had gone. If I could lay 'ands on the blighter who pinched 'er I'd make 'im remember it."

"Was the number of your car A.M. 1139?" asked P.J. "Because you'll find her in the little garage opposite the station. And it wasn't a man who pinched her, it was that Mrs. Otis van Schenk."

"You're wrong there, old fruit, because I drove 'er myself to the 1.30 London train yesterday. But 'owever do you know the number of my car?"

"You may have driven her to the station, but she didn't go by that train, because I saw her in the Cathedral yesterday afternoon, and I saw her in your car this morning. She isn't really Mrs. van Schenk at all, and she's wanted by the police."

"It don't surprise me. If a woman pinches a car, she would 'elp 'erself to a till any day of the week. I only 'ope she gets copped, and I 'ope she gets two years' 'ard, or four years, if there's any justice in the land. Likely as not, I shall find my beautiful Straker-Squire all messed-up something cruel."

"My guv'nor is waiting. I must be off. I'm awfully glad to have met you, Dick."

"Same 'ere, same 'ere, old bird," responded the pleasant-faced Taylor with much cordiality as he wrung P.J.'s hand.

THE END.

Our Competitions

Rules for Competitors

COMPETITORS *must* attend to the following rules :—

1. Subject to the age limits, you may enter for any or all of the competitions, but you must attach to your answers one Competition Form cut from the back page of the cover of the current number of the paper. It must be filled up as directed.

2. A Competition Form *must be attached to one* of the papers sent in by each competitor. Other competitions entered must have the name, address, and age of the sender written distinctly upon them.

3. Care should be taken with *writing* and *neatness*, as these will be taken into consideration in judging all competitions.

4. Address your answers to "Editress," *Children's Paper*, c/o Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., Parkside Works, Edinburgh.

5. No answers received later than **December 22** will be considered.

[*We rely upon you to send in your own unaided work.*]

Competitions for December

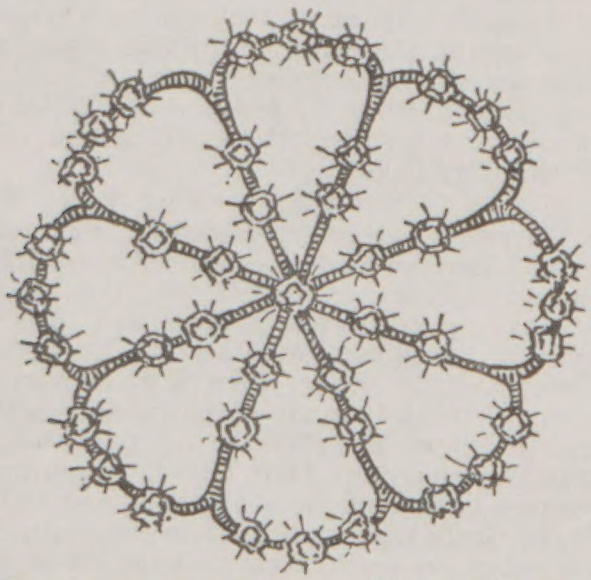
For all Ages up to Fifteen

ESSAY COMPETITION

Write a short original story to illustrate the proverb "Necessity is the mother of invention."

THE RUBY BROOCH

A lady possessed rather a unique ruby brooch. If you started from the centre and counted up one line, along the outside and down the next line, there were always eight rubies. One day a friend pointed out that



four of the stones were missing, although if you counted up in the manner described there were always eight stones. The diagram shows you how the rubies were arranged after four of the stones had been removed. How were the forty-five rubies originally arranged on the brooch ?

DRAWING AND COLOURING COMPETITION (A)

Make a drawing of the Christmas present you would like to receive.

For Children under Twelve only

COMPOSITION COMPETITION

Write a description of some one you know well.

HISTORICAL PUZZLE

The answer to each of the following is the name of a person well known in British history :

1. A hole in the ground. 2. A wild animal. 3. An assembly of Boy Scouts. 4. A series of blows. 5. A kind of grain. 6. Two letters of the alphabet. 7. A border keep. 8. A domestic fowl. 9. An adjective of the comparative degree. 10. To praise. 11. Shining. 12. Useful person in the house.

When you have found the names, give one fact about each.

DRAWING AND COLOURING COMPETITION (B)

Make a drawing of a Christmas card and colour it with water-colours or chalks.

For Children under Ten only

LETTER COMPETITION

Write a letter to a boy (or girl) in Central Africa telling him (or her) about Christmas.

DRAWING AND COLOURING COMPETITION (C)

Make a drawing of a Christmas pudding and colour it with water-colours or chalks.

Motto Competition

All readers may enter this competition. A Book Prize will be given for the motto which is published in the paper. Each motto should have the name of the author from whom the quotation is taken.

A "Smiles" Competition

A Book Prize will be given for the brightest "Smile" sent in this month.

Prize List for October

ESSAY COMPETITION

Prize-Winners.—Marie McCready, Hillsborough, Co. Down. Ethel Atkinson, Worsthorne Council School, near Burnley. Annie Boardman, National School, Adlington, Lancs. Peggy Stokes, St. Dominic's School, Harpenden Hall, Harpenden.

Honourable Mention.—Fred Berry, National School, Adlington ; Annie Hough, St. Paul's C.E. School, Adlington ; Mary Wingfield, Christ Church Girls' School, Worthing ; Ronnie Greenwood, Worsthorne Council School, near Burnley ; Ivy F. Reeve, St. Dominic's School, Harpenden ; Clifford Atkins, The Fydell School, Morcott ; Anne Clay, Kemberton School, Shifnal, Salop ; Phyllis Davies, Stoneybridge School, Belbroughton.

DRAWING AND COLOURING COMPETITION (A)

Prize-Winners.—Charles Davies, National School, Adlington, Lancs. Gladys Marchant, 1 Albany Terrace, Gillingham. Rita Thomson, Stenhouse, Carron, Falkirk.

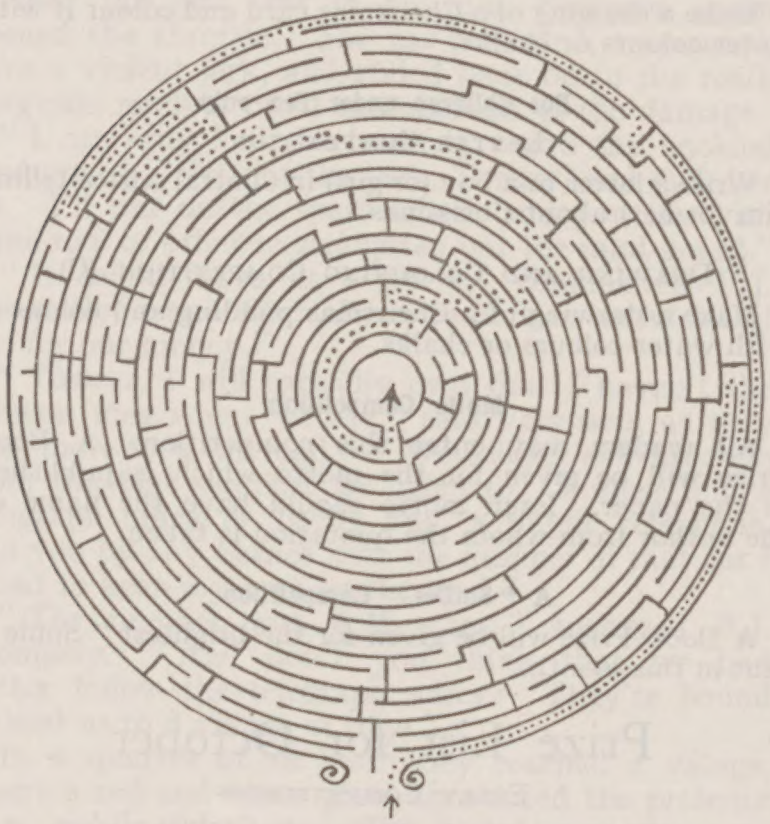
Honourable Mention.—Ernest Mottershead and W. Hewson, The Southfield School, S.W.18 ; Albert Hallows, St. Mark's School, Connah's Quay ; Barbara Smith, Dunstable ; Jack Fairhurst, National School, Adlington ; Sybil Ellis, Mount School, Kersal ; Walter Bowdler, Kemberton School, Shifnal, Salop ; Robert Irving, St. Paul's C.E. School, Adlington ; Paul Roberts, St. Mark's School, Connah's Quay.

THREADING THE MAZE

The shortest route to the centre of the maze sent in by our competitors is indicated by the dotted line in the diagram. This is the route found by the following :—

Prize-Winners.—John Small, 103 Old Govan Road, Glasgow. Alexander Pringle, 55 Wellesley Avenue, Belfast. Ethel Atkinson, Worsthorne Council School, near Burnley. Beatrice Denyer, Christ Church Girls' School, Worthing.

Honourable Mention.—Jeanie Dornan, Carricknacessna, Saintfield; Cuan H. and E. Coulter, Downpatrick; Tom Semple, Strabane; Isabel Dearling, N. Sanderson, and Isabel Turner, Southfields, S.W.18; Freda Quin, Christ Church Girls' School, Worthing; A. McDonald, Greenisland; Annie Mackins, Beckenham; Ina Ireland, Saintfield; Georgie and Jessie Bills, Saltmarket, Glasgow.



Composition Competition

Prize-Winners.—John Bennett, St. Mark's School, Connah's Quay. Hilda Bourne, Stoneybridge School, Belbroughton, near Stourbridge. Philip Tyler, The Fydell School, Morcott, Uppingham.

Honourable Mention.—Ivy Bicknell, Halford Road School; Dorothy Davey and Violet Laker, Christ Church Girls' School, Worthing; John Heaton, St. George's Boys' School, Wallasey; Elizabeth Grimes, St. Mark's School, Connah's Quay; Kathleen Watkins and Norah Roper, The Southfield School, S.W.18.

Drawing and Colouring Competition (B)

Prize-Winners.—Jack Kimber, St. James's School, Taunton. Marie Preece, 102 North Road, St. Andrew's Park, Bristol.

Honourable Mention.—Clifford Ritzema, South Shields; Roy Trego, St. James's School, Taunton; Albert Hossback, St. George's Boys' School, Wallasey; Hilda Bourne and Maurice Broad, Stoneybridge School, Belbroughton; Zoë Ethel Stericker, Mayles, Cobham.

Jumbled Fruits Competition

The solutions are as follows: 1. *Apricot, peach, pear;* 2. *Apple, bramble, orange;* 3. *Lemon or melon, mango, tomato;* 4. *Banana, cherry, plum.*

Prize-Winners.—Hilda W. Jeffrey, 50 Belgrave Road, Corstorphine. Ronald Barley, 39 Kimberley Road, London, S.W.9. Neville Sanderson, The Southfield School, London, S.W.18.

Honourable Mention.—Winnie Calder, Trinity, Edinburgh; Monica Fells, Wednesbury; Walter Scott, Newmains; Albert Hossback and Fred Hargreaves, St. George's Road Boys' School, Wallasey; Mary Adelaide Morris, Walton-le-Dale, Preston; Megan E. Williams, Liverpool; Lorna F. Ogilvie, Stewarton (no drawing).

Letter Competition

Prize-Winners.—Muriel Matthew, 40 Sedgeford Road, London, W.12. Leslie Popham, St. George's Boys' School, Wallasey.

Honourable Mention.—Hilda Beach, Rubery, Birmingham; Leslie Edgson, The Fydell School, Morcott; Margaret Skinner and Frederick Seabourne, Stoneybridge School, Belbroughton; Jack Armstrong and Ronald Coleman, St. George's Boys' School, Wallasey.

Drawing and Colouring Competition (C)

Prize-Winners.—Alice Tudor, Mount School, Kersal, Manchester. Arthur Ingham, 23 Deerpark Road, Burnley. Jessie Hill, 44 Anselm Road, Fulham, S.W.6.

Honourable Mention.—Jeanie Dornan, Carricknacessna, Saintfield; Edgar Smith, Connah's Quay; Violet Mose, Mount School, Kersal; Connie Martin, The Southfield School, S.W.18; Barbara Fox, Stoneybridge School.

Letter Bag

John Baird.—Many thanks for your note enclosing the Jumbled Town Puzzle, which is very interesting.

Edna Gillespie.—I am glad to know Flora Spurling has arrived safely. I think our readers would be interested in your party game, and I hope to print it very soon.

Claude Miller.—I enjoyed your letter very much, and think it is an excellent idea to have your *Children's Paper* bound at the end of the year. Your riddle, too, is splendid—"Why is it foolish to try to light a fire with the *Children's Paper?*" *Answer.* Because it is not dry!" Here are your "tongue-twisters" for our readers to try:

I saw Esau sitting on a see-saw by the sea-shore.

Three grey gees in a green field grazing; grey were the gees and green was the grazing.

William Kirkland and John Knight.—Many thanks for your most interesting letters, which you will see in print immediately below.

St. George's Boys' School, Wallasey.

Dear Editress,—I am very pleased with your paper this month. Teacher buys two dozen for us each month, and then we go in for competitions. But she said she does not like the stories about wars and spies, because she is trying to teach us to love peace. From our school we can see the river Dee; when it's clear we can see Welsh hills. I think I am very lucky to live in Wallasey. I live near the shore, and often go and play on the sands, and watch the pierrots. One Tuesday morning Mayor and Mayoress came and he said that every time there was a Mayor elected his name goes on the chain. He also told us about going to Wembley. I should like to have gone to Wembley and seen the Colonies.—Yours sincerely,

Wm. Kirkland.

St. George's Boys' School, Wallasey.

Dear Editress,—I think your paper is a very good one, so I am going in for some of the competitions, hoping to win a prize. I live near Liverpool, and sometimes I go to have a look at the nice shops. I think the best shop is Lewis's, because there is such a good selection of toys. Last year I got a Hornby train for Christmas, and at Easter I had a huge Easter egg. I see that you live in Scotland, which I know is a very beautiful place although I have not been there.—Your loving little friend,

John Knight.

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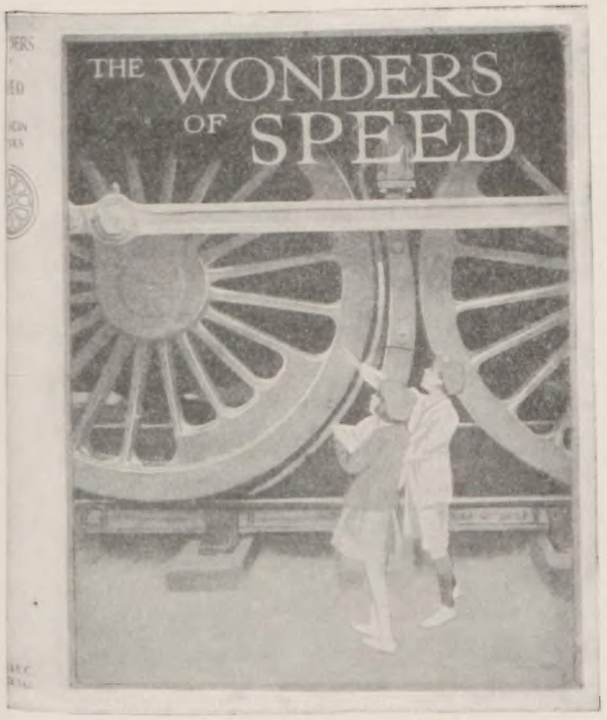

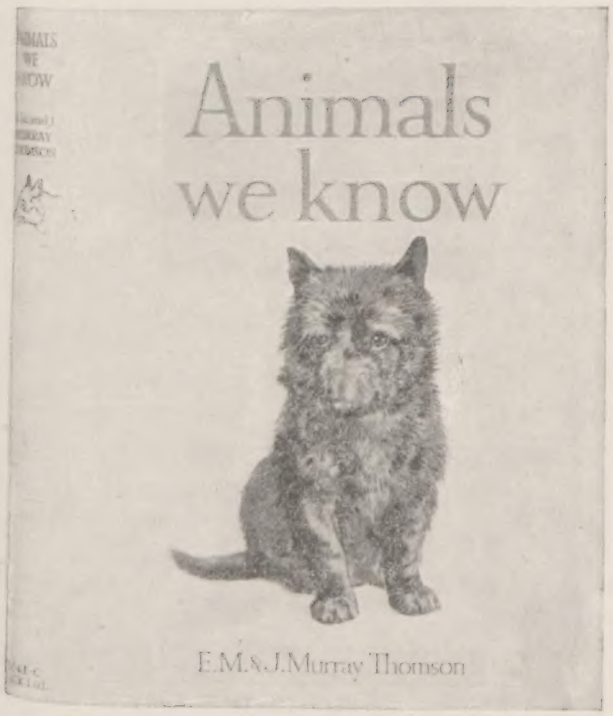

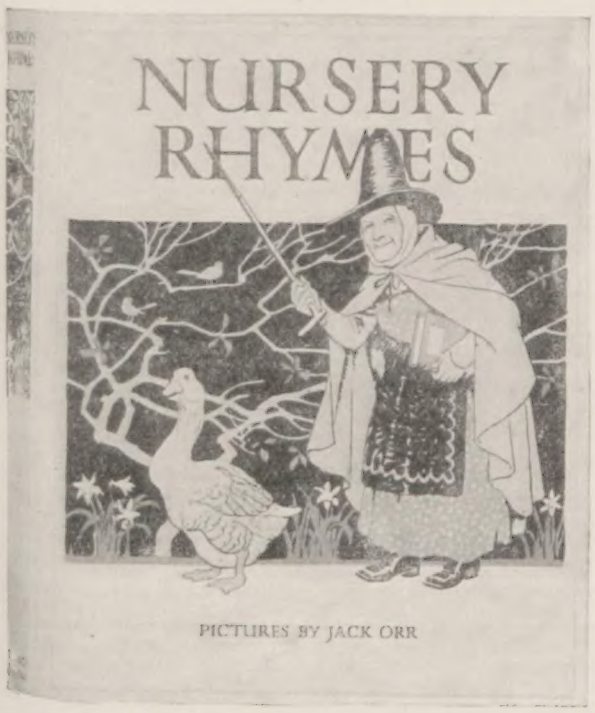

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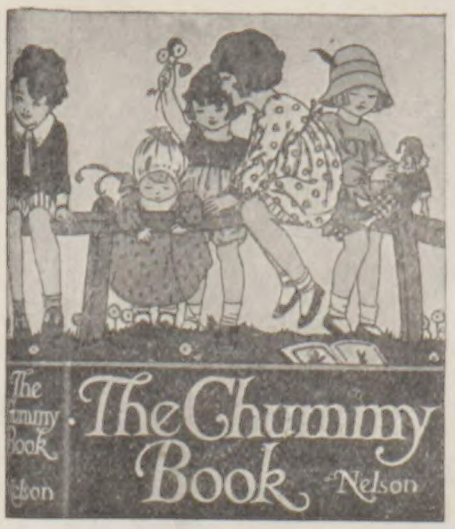

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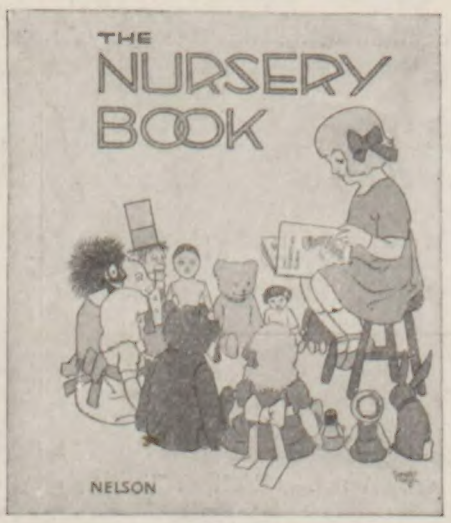

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